

Claims:

1. A process for preparing 3-chloro-5-nitrotoluene, which comprises reacting 2-methyl-4-nitroaniline with a chlorinating agent in a neutral condition to obtain 2-chloro-4-nitro-6-methylaniline and deaminating the 2-chloro-4-nitro-6-methylaniline to obtain 3-chloro-5-nitrotoluene.
2. The process as claimed in Claim 1, in which the reaction of 2-methyl-4-nitroaniline with a chlorinating agent is carried out in a solvent containing neither acid nor base.
3. The process as claimed in Claim 1 or 2, in which the chlorinating agent is t-butylhypochlorite.
4. The process as claimed in any of Claims 1 to 3, in which the deamination is carried out by adding sodium nitrite to the reactant mixture adjusted between room temperature and 0°C, allowing the reaction mixture to stand at an elevated temperature and then decreasing the temperature and keeping it at a temperature of 40 to 50°C.
5. A process for preparing 3-chloro-5-methylphenylisocyanate, which comprises reducing 3-chloro-5-nitrotoluene obtained by any process as defined in Claims 1 to 4 and reacting the resulting product with triphosgene.